DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 961 CS 013 738

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TITLE Using Poetry To Teach Phonics.
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; Elementary Education; Instructional Effectiveness; Learning Activities; *Phonics; *Poetry; Reading Aloud to Others; *Reading Processes
IDENTIFIERS Onsets and Rimes

ABSTRACT

Hearing poetry read aloud should help pupils to achieve feelings of being relaxed and reenergized. Poetry might help pupils to achieve vital objectives in reading. Phonics instruction could become an inherent part of the reading of poems. For example, a student teacher and a cooperating teacher introduced pupils to a unit on "Poetry with Rhyme" which involved the teaching team reading personally composed couplets to pupils. Pupils were asked to choose two words which rhyme; peer writing was then emphasized with each set of two writers writing a couplet. Pupils again selected the two rhyming words to add to those contained in the couplet. Learners then brainstormed additional rhyming words having more than a single letter for an onset. There was much enthusiasm in brainstorming sessions to obtain rhyming words. Learners seemingly were able to use the onset/rime approach to determine unknown words in reading as well as to use a variety of words to show clarity and diversity of words in written discourse. Triplets and quatrains were also written in this manner. Finally the teaching team led the class in writing a limerick, after they first prepared by reading two Edward Lear limericks and discovered the ingredients by observing the written form on the screen. Poetry writing can be an enjoyable way to learn what is useful in word recognition. (NKA)

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Using Poetry to Teach Phonics.

by Marlow Ediger

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USING POETRY TO TEACH PHONICS

Poetry is to be read orally to pupils in a manner which captures interests and attention. Content in poems tend to be presented in a creative way with alliteration, similes, and metaphors. Onomatopoeia is another ingredient commonly inherent in poetry with its echoic sounding words.

Enjoyment of poetry by pupils is essential. Destroying interest in verse is definitely to be frowned upon. Hearing poetry read orally should help pupils to achieve feelings of being relaxed and reenergized. A change of pace in classroom activities occurs when time for poetry is emphasized.

Pupils also need opportunities to read poetry to each other in a collaborative setting. Voice inflection, proper pitch and stress, as well as juncture, should be in the offing.

Which additional uses for poetry might well help pupils to achieve vital objectives in reading? The balance of this paper will stress helping pupils achieve phonics knowledge and skills through the reading of poetry.

Poetry and Phonics

Phonics instruction might well become an inherent part of the reading of poems. Phonics here should emphasize developing vital knowledge, relevant skills, and quality attitudes.

In my observations made in supervising student teachers and cooperating teachers in the public schools, I have noticed delightful activities in phonics learnings within units and lessons on poetry.

A student teacher and cooperating teacher, as a team, introduced pupils to a unit on "Poetry With Rhyme." The first learning activity involved the team reading personally composed couplets to pupils. The following were read orally:

The New Dog
I like to play with my new dog.
The dog loves to sit beside a hog.

In addition to enjoying the couplet, pupils were also asked to choose two words which rhyme. Peer writing was then emphasized with each set of two writers writing a couplet. One product was the following:

I sat in a chair to watch my cat.
He seemed to like playing with a tall hat.

Pupils again selected the two rhyming words that add to those contained in the couplet, such as bat, fat, mat, pat, rat, sat, tat, and vat. Learners then brainstormed additional rhyming words having more than a single letter for an onset, such as th, sp, fr, br, ch, and gn. Related to the onset was the rime - "at."

There was much pupil enthusiasm in brainstorming sessions to obtain rhyming words. Learners seemingly were able to use the onset/rime approach to determine unknown words in reading as well as to use a variety of words to show clarity and diversity of words in written discourse.

In addition to the couplet composed and read by the student teachers and the cooperating teacher, as a team, these teachers also wrote a triplet, read to the class.

The man on the street was sad.
He had much to worry about what was bad.
The man used worry as a fad.

After this experience, pupils individually wrote triplets using other words than the "ad" rime. An outstanding triplet by a pupil was the following:

A Clever Experience

I once read a poem on "Dad."
I wish he was with me to write on a pad.
His advice was needed for me to be glad.

When pupils hear and become conscious of rhyming words, they appear to transfer these kinds of learnings to word recognition techniques, such as phonics in reading content. Poetry with rhyme can assist pupils to use phonics to identify unknown words in print discourse.

Writing Quatrains

In sequence following the writing of couplets and triplets, the student teacher and cooperating teacher read their team composed quatrain. When I asked the team why they read their own composed poetry instead of reading from an anthology, they replied with, "We wanted pupils to know that we enjoyed and also wrote poems. We do not want pupils to feel that they are required to write poetry while we don't want to write verse."

The following self composed quatrain was written and read orally by the student teacher and the cooperating teacher to pupils:

The Robin

The robin hops on the ground
Wishing a worm to be found
While doing so, it made many a sound
and moved in a circle, round and round.

All ending words generally rhyme in a quatrain, which contains four lines. Pupils seemingly were very attentive to the student teacher and the cooperating teacher's composed poems. These self-written poems tend to serve well as models for pupils to emulate.

One committee of three pupils volunteered to write a quatrain collaboratively. The following poem resulted:

Sand

I like to see and feel the wet sand.
When formed with my hands it looks like a band.
I am hoping to build with my hands,
A sand castle on a square piece of land.

A second committee brainstormed rhyming words with the "and" rime. The onsets for the rime were the following, determined collaboratively: st, bl, gr, gl, and b. Additional rhyming words were then identified: canned, planned, manned, fanned, panned, banned, and tanned.

A third committee volunteered to select from a story in the basal reader, words which contained the same beginning sound, as the title of the above named poem, entitled Sand. The following words were noticed, with the concept of alliteration being discussed: same, sold, solid, something, somewhere, smart, so, sort, some, and solo(s).

A committee of three wrote two lines of verse using the above named words to stress alliteration:

Solid Something

Same, solid, smart something
Somewhere, sold solos.

Onomatopoeia, echoic sounding morphemes, were also brain stormed, such as the following: swoosh, bang, splish, grasp, boom, shout, scream, roar, scrape, and soosh, among others.

There was more reluctance to secure volunteers in writing two lines of verse containing onomatopoeia. Thus, two were appointed to write a poem containing onomatopoeia. The following resulted:

Bang Boom

The man used the hammer with a bang,
He did not go swoosh and splish
But rather with a roar and shout.

Several pupils individually wrote couplets, triplets, and quatrains as homework. This did indicate motivation in doing the writing voluntarily. The poems were read orally by pupils with the student teacher and the cooperating teacher asking for examples in each poem of alliteration, onomatopoeia, and rhyming words.

To culminate the poetry units, the student teacher and cooperating teacher led the class as whole in writing a limerick. The following sequence in teaching was used to write the limerick:

1. Reading two limericks by Edward Lear.
2. Having pupils discover ingredients that make for a limerick by observing the written form on the screen, from word processor use.
3. Encouraging pupils to present sequential lines of limerick.

The following completed limerick was the following class project:

Boy With a Broom

There once was a young boy in the room.
He swept the space clean with a broom.
The boy soon got tired,
And then he was fired.
That young boy had a feeling of doom.

A question arose as to what is meant by "imagery" in poetry writing. The question was raised by a girl whose mother is a high school English teacher. The student teacher and the cooperating teacher used the following examples, printed on the chalkboard:

The bird soared <u>like a streak of lightning.</u>

The underlined part makes a creative comparison with "The bird soared..." The word "like" indicates a simile and is used to make the comparison, whereas a metaphor is used below and is underlined:

The bird, <u>a streak of lightning in the sky,</u> soared gracefully.

The underlined "a streak of lightnings in the sky," makes a creative comparison with "The bird soared gracefully in the sky." Similes use the words "like" or "as" in making creative comparisons whereas metaphors merely make the contrasts, not using "like" or "as."

In Conclusion

Carefully chosen poetry read orally to pupils as well as written by these learners may do much to assist them to become increasingly proficient in phonics. A major goal of phonics instruction is to guide pupils to identify unknown words. Rhyme in words should help pupils to become increasingly conscious of patterns in spelling as well as sound/symbol relationships.

Pupils tend to enjoy poetry with rhyme such as couplets, triplets, quatrains, and limericks. Novelty is involved in playing with rhyming words to develop each of these kinds of poetry. With listening to and writing rhymed poetry, pupils hear sounds as well as words in partial/complete sentences. Phonics involves hearing likenesses and differences in sounds and words. Poetry writing can be an enjoyable way to learn what is useful in word recognition. Added to rhyme, ingredients that poets use in writing include alliteration, onomatopoeia, and imagery. These three poetic devices further assist pupils to become sensitive to words and their inherent parts as well as wholes.